

significantly improve our economy. We should not allow this important tax credit to expire. Congress must act quickly now to renew the first-time homebuyer tax credit.

WE ARE OUR BROTHERS' AND SISTERS' KEEPER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your kindness and generosity.

I rise today for a number of thank yous and acknowledgments.

First of all, I think it is very important to acknowledge, when tragedy occurs, how important it is that this country, as it has often done, rallies around those around the world to help them in their time of need.

I want to pay tribute to one of our colleagues—to the delegate from American Samoa, Congressman FALEOMAVAEGA—who has in the last couple of weeks been subjected to terrible tragedies at home, for on September 29, 2009, American Samoa and other areas in the surrounding areas were impacted by an 8.3 earthquake, 8.3 on the Richter scale, which was recognized as the world's largest earthquake of 2009. Out of that earthquake came a terrible tsunami, one that struck American Samoa, Samoa and neighboring Tonga, sweeping people and cars out to sea as survivors fled to high ground.

We remember the tsunami of some years ago that impacted Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India in parts. I traveled to Sri Lanka, and realized that the devastation was enormous. So, when there was a tsunami with waves that reached up to 20 feet in height and that penetrated 1 mile inland, we knew how devastating that had to be. It caused death and destruction of a nearly unprecedented amount. The death toll as of October 7 is estimated at 32 in American Samoa and 135 in the independent state of Samoa.

Many individuals and families have suffered and are impacted, now lacking basic survival necessities, and they remain at risk of additional death due to the shortage of clean water and of adequate shelter and food. My colleague who represents the area has been working without ceasing, but the deep human disaster is evident.

So I rise today to thank the 300 responders from FEMA; the American Red Cross; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the Department of Health and Human Services; and from other Federal agencies which rushed forward to help our fellow world citizens: The United States Navy; the United States Coast Guard; the Hawaii Air and National Guard; the U.S. Army Reserve; American Samoa under the leadership of Admiral Timothy J. Keating, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command; many, many others; and the foreign governments who came to their aid.

So it is important that we recognize that we are, in fact, our brothers' and sisters' keeper, and we thank those who have already come forward, but we look forward in this Congress to continue to work, as we have worked before, to ensure that they are re-stabilized. We must recognize the humanitarian response that is currently underway. We are, in essence, commending them, but it is important that we continue to encourage donors and other relief agencies to work with these vulnerable organizations in stricken areas because we know, having experience in the United States with the fires in California, with the floods in the Midwest, and with the terrible hurricanes in Florida, Louisiana and Texas, and we understand disaster. We are grateful for those who have helped, but we want and we need continued help.

We commend the over 100,000 Samoan residents in the United States from American Samoa and Samoa for coming to the aid of their fellow brothers and sisters. It is important for this Congress to not only pay tribute but to recognize that people are still hurting.

Let me end this by again thanking our American Representative—our delegate from American Samoa—and by thanking him for his strength.

Just for a moment, Mr. Speaker, I turn very briefly to join with my colleague who spoke earlier, Congresswoman KAPTUR, to say this point: Americans are still suffering. Foreclosures are still happening. Small businesses are still not getting access to capital. I beseech those who have received the larger part of the bailout because it was necessary to restore capital markets in a capitalistic system. None of us adhere to socialism, but we do adhere to helping ourselves and helping our brothers and sisters across America.

It is crucial for the banks of America to lend to Americans—to taxpayers, to homeowners, to business owners. Let them expand. Let them add new employees. Let them keep their homes. The tight credit market is choking us. It is killing hardworking Americans who, as I said, are the beneficiaries but yet the benefactors of those who are in need around the world, and it is important for our banks to listen. They were bailed out. They'd better listen to the American people.

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IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM MUST BE STOPPED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I appreciated what my colleague just said about the banks, and one of the things that I think we ought to focus on in addition to that is that we are not energy independent and we're not allowed the

drill off the Continental Shelf or in the ANWR in Alaska or do other exploration for a number of reasons, not the least of which is, quote-unquote, environmental.

But at the same time we won't allow offshore drilling here, we just gave Brazil \$2 billion so they can drill off their shores. It just doesn't make any sense to me. We ought to be spending that money here at home exploring for oil so we can move towards energy independence. We have a 400- or 500-year supply of natural gas and we have plenty of oil if we just could go get it, and we can do it in an environmentally safe way.

Now the reason I bring that up is because one of the big problems we face is we get 35 to 40 percent of our oil from the Middle East, and one of the big problems facing the United States and the world right now is Iran. Iran has been developing a nuclear program, a nuclear weapons program for some time, and our position in the United States now, under the new administration, is to try to work with them, to talk with them to stop them with their nuclear development program. And if they don't, we're going to try to get a sanctions bill passed.

Now, we have a bill sponsored by the chairman of the International Relations Committee, Mr. BERMAN, that has over 300 cosponsors—I happen to be one of them—and we believe we ought to bring that bill to the floor as quickly as possible to try to put pressure on Iran to stop the development of the nuclear weapons program.

But the administration, I think, has suggested we should wait. They were trying to bring China and Russia on board, and China and Russia are not going to be on board. So we should do it by ourselves and we should do it expeditiously.

Let me tell you why I think it's so important. If Iran continues down this path, Israel—whom Iran has said they want to destroy—will have no choice but to defend itself. They cannot let Iran develop a nuclear bomb and a delivery system. If they do that, they will be able to destroy Israel and millions of Jews in Israel in a very short period of time. It will be another Holocaust.

So what will happen? If they get too far down the path, if we don't put pressure on them to stop—and they don't stop—I believe Israel will have no choice but to attack Iran. And if they attack Iran, that could end up in being a major conflagration in the entire Persian Gulf area.

Now, why is that important to us? We get 35 to 40 percent of our energy from the Persian Gulf area. If that goes up in smoke, we will lose 35 to 40 percent of the energy that we have in this country because we're not energy independent.

The lights that we have, the gasoline in our cars, the fuel we use to heat our houses, everything that needs energy will suffer, and we will have severe economic problems if this problem isn't